SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES

†
8:4

DEEP DIVE

Acts

Chapter Eight, Verses 1–40

Joy in Samaria, Joy on the Road — a scattered church, a city set free, a sorcerer exposed, and a royal treasurer who went home rejoicing

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

Stephen's death unleashes a persecution, and the scattered believers preach wherever they go. Philip brings Christ to Samaria, the Spirit comes, a magician tries to buy God's gift, and then an angel sends Philip to one man in a chariot reading Isaiah 53. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind Luke's key words.

THE PASSAGE

Acts 8:1–40

scattered · Samaria · Simon · the eunuch

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Five movements from Stephen's grave to the coast road at Caesarea

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"So there was much rejoicing in that city." — Acts 8:8

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

Acts 8:1–40

Joy in Samaria, Joy on the Road — persecution drives the word out of Jerusalem — to the Samaritans, and down a desert road toward the ends of the earth

† How to Read This Study

This study walks Acts 8 in 5 movements, in Luke's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where Luke is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word — R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle — MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions; Command / instruction; Key repeated word; Sin / warning; Promise / blessing; Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · ACTS 8:4

"Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word."

† Before the Passage

Jesus' last words before His ascension set the map for the whole book: "you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (1:8). For seven chapters the church has stayed in Jerusalem. Acts 8 is where it leaves — not by a missions plan but by a persecution. The day Stephen is buried, the church is "scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles" (v. 1).

Philip, like Stephen, was one of the seven chosen in Acts 6:5 to serve tables; later he is "Philip the evangelist" with a home in Caesarea and four prophesying daughters (21:8–9). He is not the apostle Philip. He goes first to Samaria — the people Jews and Samaritans had despised each other over for centuries, the same region where Jesus met the woman at the well and said, "lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest" (John 4:35). Guzik credits that earlier sowing for this harvest.

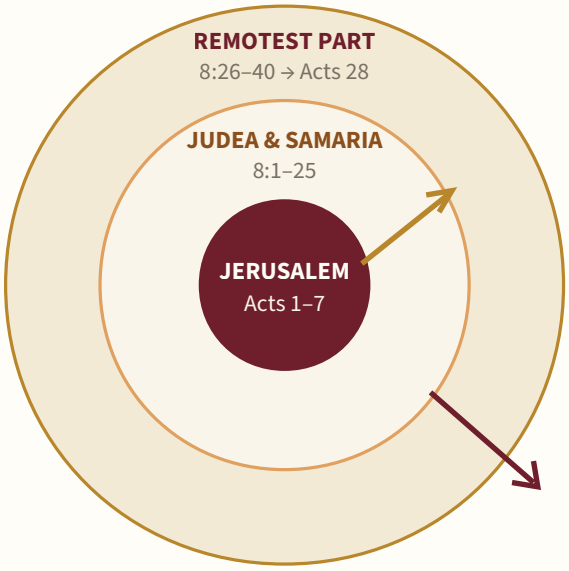
The chapter holds two very different converts side by side. Simon, a famous magician in Samaria, "believed" and was baptized (v. 13), then tried to buy the power to give the Holy Spirit. The Ethiopian, a eunuch and treasurer to the queen of the Ethiopians, was reading Isaiah 53 in his chariot when Philip ran up beside him.

Under the Law a eunuch could not enter the assembly of the LORD (Deuteronomy 23:1), but Isaiah had promised, "Nor let the eunuch say, 'Behold, I am a dry tree'" (Isaiah 56:3). In Acts 8 that promise is kept on a desert road.

A note on verse 37. The NASB prints it in brackets because the oldest Greek manuscripts do not contain it; the KJV includes it from later manuscripts. Its words — "If you believe with all your heart, you may" — are true to the rest of the New Testament (Romans 10:9), but they are probably not part of what Luke wrote, so this study notes them and does not build on them. Two of our teachers, Guzik and Henry, comment on the words without raising the textual question; Sproul's sermon does not mention them.

FIGURE · ACTS 1:8 IN MOTION

ACTS 1:8 IN MOTION · ACTS 8 CROSSES TWO LINES IN ONE CHAPTER



8:1	the church scattered from Jerusalem
8:4	the scattered preach the word everywhere
8:5–8	Philip: Christ proclaimed to Samaritans
8:14–17	Samaritans receive the Spirit
8:25	the apostles preach in Samaritan villages
8:27	an Ethiopian official, heading home
8:39	he goes on his way rejoicing

Jesus named three circles in Acts 1:8; follow the arrows and the list to see Acts 8 carry the word across the second line and start on the third.

I
MOVEMENT

ACTS 8:1–4

Scattered, They Preached the Word

Saul approves, devout men weep, the church is driven out — and the word goes with it

> 1 ⚠ *Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death*. *And on that day* ⚠ *a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.* 2 *Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him.* 3 *But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.* 4 *Therefore,* *those who had been scattered went about preaching the word*.
>
> ACTS 8:1–4

> *“but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”*
>
> ACTS 1:8

διασπείρω

DIASPEIRŌ · “SCATTER” · G1289

From *dia* (throughout) and *speirō* (to sow seed) — the root of “diaspora.” Used in verses 1 and 4 and again in 11:19. The enemies meant to scatter the church like chaff; God scattered it like seed. Verse 4 begins “Therefore” — the scattering is the reason for the preaching, not an interruption of it.

εὐαγγελίζω

EUANGELIZŌ · “PREACH THE GOOD NEWS” · G2097

The verb behind our “evangelize.” In verse 4 it is the scattered believers — not the apostles, who stayed in Jerusalem — who are “preaching the word” (*euangelizomenoi ton logon*). Luke uses it again for Philip (vv. 12, 35, 40) and for the apostles on their way home (v. 25). Ordinary disciples carried the gospel out of the city.

λυμαίνομαι

LYMAINOMAI · “RAVAGE” · G3075

Only here in the New Testament: Saul “began ravaging the church” (v. 3). The word was used of wild animals tearing and of armies laying waste. Paul never forgot it: “how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it” is how he later described these days (Galatians 1:13).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that Saul took pleasure in Stephen’s death and in what followed: “The floodgates of persecution were now open against the Christians.” Saul went from house to house dragging men and women to prison. But the persecution did what the church had not yet done on its own — it obeyed Acts 1:8. Guzik calls most of the scattered believers “accidental missionaries” who simply talked about Jesus wherever they landed, and he sees Stephen’s blood as seed for the church’s growth.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew’s

Sproul’s “Saul of Tarsus” (28 March 2004) studies the persecutor: a Roman citizen from Tarsus, trained under Gamaliel, sincere to the bone. “Paul was sure he was right, but he could not have been more wrong than to be complicit in the murder of a saint.” Sincerity is no defense against the truth. In “The Gospel to Samaria” (2 May 2004) he picks up verse 4: “Those who were scattered proclaimed the gospel of Christ everywhere they went” — laymen, not apostles, carrying the message out of the city.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon opens “Great Joy in the City” (No. 2352, preached 22 January 1888) at the grave: the joy in Samaria was born of sorrow in Jerusalem. “Yet it was that persecution that made the disciples go abroad, everywhere preaching the Word!” He draws a hard lesson for comfortable churches: “Sometimes, dear Friends, it is a blessing to a Church to have a great trial.” Trials, he argues, can make a church useful to others in a way that ease never does.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry honors the men who buried Stephen: “They buried him solemnly, and made great lamentation over him,” refusing to be ashamed of his cause. He notes Saul’s zeal — “Saul was bred a scholar, a gentleman, and yet did not think it below him” to drag believers off himself. Henry reads “they were all scattered” more narrowly than Guzik and Sproul: “not all the believers, but all the preachers, who were principally struck at.” Either way, “They went every where,” and the word went with them.

II
MOVEMENT

ACTS 8:5–13

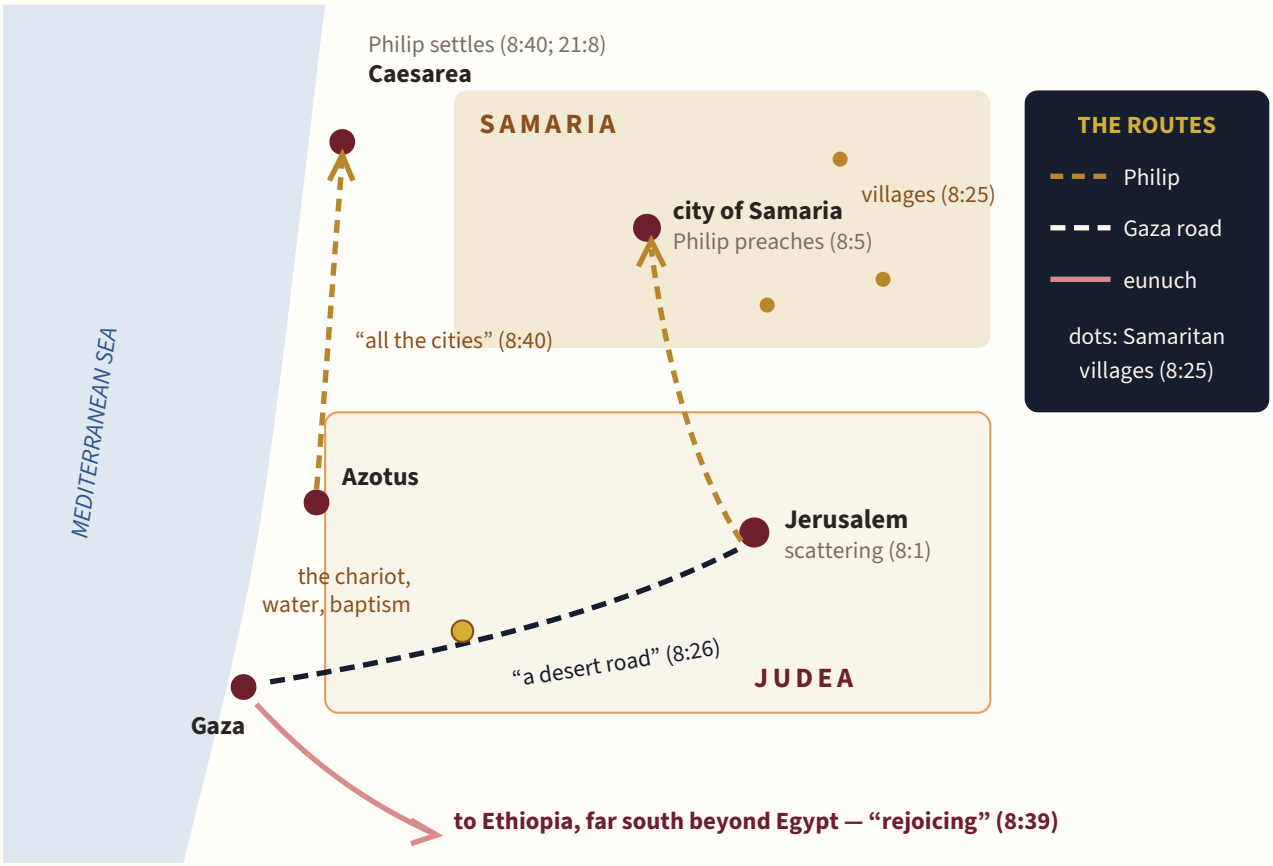
Philip Proclaimed Christ

Unclean spirits leave, the lame walk, a city rejoices — and the magician believes

5 *Philip went down to the city of Samaria and* △ *began proclaiming Christ to them*. 6 *The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing.* 7 *For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed.* 8 *So there was* ☆ *much rejoicing in that city*. 9 *Now there was a man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city and astonishing the people of Samaria,* ⚠ *claiming to be someone great;* 10 *and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, “This man is what is called the Great Power of God.”* 11 *And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts.* 12 *But when they believed Philip preaching* △ *the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being* ⟲ *baptized, men and women alike.* 13 ◷ *Even Simon himself believed; and after being* ⟲ *baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed.*

ACTS 8:5–13

FIGURE · PHILIP'S ROADS



Philip goes north to Samaria, is sent south to the desert road toward Gaza, and finishes on the coast at Caesarea — while the Ethiopian heads on south toward home.

χαρά

CHARA · "JOY" · G5479

"So there was much rejoicing in that city" (v. 8) — literally "much joy." Luke loves the word: joy at Jesus' birth (Luke 2:10), joy after His ascension (Luke 24:52). Acts 8 has joy at both ends — a city in Samaria (v. 8) and a man in a chariot (v. 39 uses the related verb *chairō*). Where Christ is preached and received, joy follows.

μαγεύω

MAGEUŌ · "PRACTICE MAGIC" · G3096

Only here in the New Testament (v. 9), with the noun *mageia* (G3095), "magic arts," in verse 11 — the source of Simon's later name, Simon Magus. The people called him "the Great Power of God" (v. 10; *dynamis*, G1411). The true power of God came with Philip's preaching of Christ, and the city could see the difference.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes the long hostility between Jews and Samaritans and Philip's freedom from it: "Because Jesus had worked in him there was no room for this kind of prejudice in his heart or mind." He credits Jesus' earlier visit to Samaria (John 4) for the readiness of the harvest, and the joy in the city to Philip's preaching of Christ. On Simon he is careful: "At this point – up to Acts 8:13 – there is nothing to indicate that Simon's belief was false or insincere." "Yet it will be tested by his conduct and response over time."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul explains the joy plainly: "There was great joy in the city because it had been under demonic oppression." Philip's preaching came with exorcisms and healings, and the city was set free. Simon is another matter. Comparing ancient magic to modern stage illusion, Sproul says "Simon Magus knew that his power was counterfeit," which is why Philip's real miracles amazed him. "Simon believed in the power of God" — but Sproul distinguishes that kind of assent from saving faith in Christ.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon sees Philip reaping what Jesus planted: "Jesus sowed the seed—Philip came and reaped the harvest!" Philip was a deacon, not a famous preacher, and his message was the point: "He did not preach up what they could do— he preached what Christ had done—". The proof was changed lives — "Filthy blasphemy has been given up and their speech has been seasoned with salt!" — and "The practical effect of Christianity is happiness, therefore let it be spread abroad everywhere!" In his exposition he adds of verse 13: "Simon believed after a certain style and fashion."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry marks Simon's faith carefully. "Simon himself believed also." "He was convinced that Philip preached a true doctrine, because he saw it confirmed by real miracles". Philip baptized him on his profession, a judgment of charity, not a reading of his soul. Henry warns that "Even bad men, very bad, may sometimes be in a good frame, very good," and that time and trial show what a profession is worth.

III
MOVEMENT

ACTS 8:14–25

The Gift of God Is Not for Sale

Peter and John come down, the Samaritans receive the Spirit, and a magician offers money

14 *Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter*
and John, 15 *who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.* 16 *For He had not*
yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 *Then they began*
laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. 18 *Now when Simon saw that the Spirit*
was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 *saying, "Give this*
authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 *But Peter*
said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with
money! 21 *"You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.* 22 *"Therefore*
repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be
forgiven you. 23 *"For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity."* 24 *But*
Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me yourselves, so that nothing of what you have said may come
upon me." 25 *So, when they had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they started back to*
Jerusalem, and were preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

ACTS 8:14–25

FIGURE · SIMON AND THE ETHIOPIAN

TWO MEN, BOTH BAPTIZED · TWO VERY DIFFERENT HEARTS

	SIMON OF SAMARIA	THE ETHIOPIAN
BAPTIZED	“after being baptized” (v13)	“he baptized him” (v38)
DRAWN BY	“signs and great miracles” (v13)	“reading the prophet Isaiah” (v28)
HE ASKS FOR	“Give this authority to me” (v19)	“unless someone guides me?” (v31)
HE OFFERS	“he offered them money” (v18)	“invited Philip to … sit with him” (v31)
HE HEARS	“your heart is not right” (v21)	“he preached Jesus to him” (v35)
HE ENDS	“Pray to the Lord for me” (v24)	“went on his way rejoicing” (v39)

One wanted Christ’s power; the other wanted Christ. Water alone could not tell them apart.

Read across each row: both men were baptized, but what they wanted, asked for and went away with show two different hearts.

δωρεά

DŌREA · “GIFT” · G1431

A free gift — the word for the Holy Spirit as “the gift” in Acts 2:38 and for “the gift of God” in John 4:10. Simon “thought you could obtain the gift of God with money” (v. 20). A gift that can be bought is no longer a gift. His name gave the church the word “simony,” the buying and selling of spiritual office.

χολὴ πικρίας

CHOLĒ PIKRIAS · “GALL OF BITTERNESS” · G5521, G4088

Cholē is gall, bile — the bitter drink offered to Jesus at the cross (Matthew 27:34). *Pikria* is bitterness (Ephesians 4:31). The phrase echoes Deuteronomy 29:18, a root bearing “poisonous fruit and wormwood.” With it Peter joins *syndesmos* (G4886), “bondage” — a bond or chain. Simon was poisoned inside and tied up by his own sin, whatever he had professed.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik lists five ways Christians have explained why the Samaritans received the Spirit after their baptism, including the view that God delayed the gift to bind Samaria to the Jerusalem church. He settles on the last — that they were born again and had the Spirit, but received special gifts and graces through the apostles: “The last option seems to best explain what happened,” “a filling of the Holy Spirit we should always desire and seek.” Simon saw it and reached for his wallet: “Simon thought that the Holy Spirit was merely a power that could be bought or sold.” His reply to Peter was a cop out, and “We don’t know what became of Simon.”

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul calls the coming of the Spirit here the extension of the Pentecost experience to non-Jewish believers, though he does not settle why it came after baptism. On Simon he is firm where Guzik is cautious: "Peter knew right away that Simon's profession of faith was spurious." Simon's fear of punishment was at best attrition — "That is not true repentance." Sproul ties the sin to the medieval sale of church offices that the Reformation fought: "God is simply not for sale." "The grace of God cannot be earned."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry sees the laying on of hands as a mark of the apostles' particular authority in that first generation. Simon's offer was an insult to them and a window into his heart, for "The disguises of hypocrites many times are soon seen through." Peter's diagnosis is severe: "They are in the gall of bitterness—odious to God, as that which is bitter as gall is to us," and bound in iniquity. Yet Peter still calls him to repent and pray, and Henry gives Simon's answer in his own wording: "Pray you to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken come upon me."

IV
MOVEMENT

ACTS 8:26–35

Do You Understand What You Are Reading?

An angel, a desert road, a royal treasurer, and the Lamb of Isaiah 53

[26] But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road.) [27] So he got up and went; and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, [28] and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. [29] Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot." [30] Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" [31] And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. [32] Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: "HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER; AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT, SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH. [33] "IN HUMILIATION HIS JUDGMENT WAS TAKEN AWAY; WHO WILL RELATE HIS GENERATION? FOR HIS LIFE IS REMOVED FROM THE EARTH." [34] The eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?" [35] Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.

ACTS 8:26–35

"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?"

ISAIAH 53:7–8

εὐνοῦχος · δυνάστης

EUNOUCHOS · DYNASTĒS · "EUNUCH, COURT OFFICIAL" · G2135, G1413

Eunouchos is used five times of this man (vv. 27, 34, 36, 38, 39) — Luke will not let us forget it. Eunuchs often served queens, and he was a *dynastēs*, a man of power, over all the treasure (*gaza*, G1047) of Candace. The Law barred a eunuch from the assembly (Deuteronomy 23:1); Isaiah promised eunuchs "an everlasting name" in God's house (56:3–5). He went to Jerusalem to worship and came home with that name.

ὁδηγέω

HODĒGEŌ · "GUIDE" · G3594

To lead on the way, from *hodos* (road) and *hēgeomai* (lead). "How could I, unless someone guides me?" (v. 31) — said on a road, about a road-map. Jesus used the word of the Spirit: "He will guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13). Here the Spirit guides Philip to the chariot (v. 29) so that Philip can guide the reader to Jesus (v. 35). The Greek of the question in verse 30 is a pun: *ginōskeis ha anaginōskeis?* — "do you know what you are reading?"

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik admires the Ethiopian: "He was a noble man on a noble search." "Candace was the title for certain female royalty in Ethiopia," and the Ethiopia of that day reached far beyond the modern country. He was reading the "amazing and specific prophecies in Isaiah 53 describing the sacrificial, sin-bearing work of the Messiah to come," and his question — of whom does the prophet speak? — was the very question Jews of the day argued about: Israel, Isaiah, or the Messiah? Philip answered it with one name.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The Ethiopian Eunuch" (9 May 2004) enjoys the details. The road had fallen out of use — "This is desert." The man was likely a God-fearing Gentile, rich enough to own a scroll and a driver: "The eunuch would not have been holding the reins." He was reading aloud, as ancient readers did — "It takes a certain sophistication to be able to read silently" — so Philip could hear him. Philip ran to overtake the chariot and preached Christ from Isaiah, because "Not one word of the New Testament was yet in print."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "Understandest Thou What Thou Readest?" (11 May 1884) insists, "The Bible was meant to be understood, and it benefits us in proportion as we get at the meaning of it." Philip, "who is nobody in particular, only a poor preacher of the Word, runs up to the chariot, and solemnly asks" the question every reader needs. And Philip, "who did understand it, when he explained it, preached unto the eunuch Jesus and nothing else." His counsel: "Let me advise that when you read a passage in the Scriptures which you do not understand, you should read it until you do."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry makes the treasurer a model of a learner. A great man on a long journey, "He not only relieved the tediousness of the journey, but redeemed time by reading," His humility opened the door: he admitted he could not understand without a guide and invited a stranger into his chariot. Henry hears the right question in verse 34 — of whom does the prophet speak? — and Philip, beginning from that Scripture, gave the only right answer.

V
MOVEMENT

ACTS 8:36–40

What Prevents Me from Being Baptized?

Water by the road, a confession, an evangelist snatched away, and a man rejoicing

> 36 *As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?"* 37 *[And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."]* 38 *And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him.* 39 *When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.* 40 *But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities until he came to Caesarea.*
>
> ACTS 8:36–40

> *"[And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."]"*
>
> ACTS 8:37 (BRACKETED IN THE NASB)

βαπτίζω

BAPTIZŌ · "BAPTIZE" · G907

To dip or immerse; five times in this chapter (vv. 12, 13, 16, 36, 38). Here "they both went down into the water" and "came up out of the water" (vv. 38–39). Our teachers read that differently: Guzik takes it as immersion; Sproul warns, "There is not one word in this text about the mode of baptism." What everyone agrees on is the order: the man heard Jesus preached, believed, and was baptized at the first water he saw.

ἁρπάζω

HARPAZŌ · "SNATCH AWAY" · G726

To seize suddenly, to carry off by force. "The Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away" (v. 39). It is the word Paul uses for the catching up of believers to meet the Lord: "we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Guzik draws the same link. One moment Philip is there; the next he is at Azotus, and the Ethiopian is left with the Scripture and his joy.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik reads the baptism as by immersion — they went down into the water. He treats the words of verse 37 as part of the text and comments on the condition, faith with all the heart, without discussing the manuscripts. Then Philip vanishes: "This is a strange, perhaps unprecedented event in the Scriptures." Guzik says Philip was transported "supernaturally in some way" to Azotus, and compares the moment to Jesus crossing the lake in John 6 and to the catching up of believers in 1 Thessalonians 4.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul draws on Oscar Cullmann's study of an early church "hindrance formula" — the question "What prevents?" asked before a baptism — and argues that entry required only a simple profession of faith in Christ. He refuses to settle the mode from this text: "There is not one word in this text about the mode of baptism." "Be careful how many inferences you draw from that." "All we know was that he was baptized in and with water." Then the Spirit takes Philip, who preaches from Azotus all the way to Caesarea.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon loves the eunuch's eagerness: "I like this eunuch for proposing that he should be baptized." Understanding the gospel always shows itself in joy, and the man who heard of the Lamb went home glad: "The faith of the Scriptures leads joy by the hand, and chases away despair." In his exposition of the chapter he notices what stayed behind when Philip was taken: "The Spirit of the Lord did not take away the Bible—that was left for the eunuch." The preacher was gone; the Word and the joy remained.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry, reading the King James text, comments on verse 37 — "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest" — and on the confession that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the faith into which the eunuch was baptized. When Philip was taken, the man did not grieve or go looking for him: "But he went on rejoicing." Henry pictures the joy of that road home: "he was never better pleased in all his life."

VI
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

From a dry tree in Isaiah to the Lamb and the ends of the earth

> *"Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely separate me from His people." Nor let the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree.""*
>
> ISAIAH 56:3

> *"Envoys will come out of Egypt; Ethiopia will quickly stretch out her hands to God."*
>
> PSALM 68:31

> *"Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest."*
>
> JOHN 4:35

> *"Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."*
>
> LUKE 24:27

> *"knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."*
>
> 1 PETER 1:18-19

> *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter."*
>
> MATTHEW 7:21

> *"that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;"*
>
> ROMANS 10:9

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

In his exposition of the chapter Spurgeon marvels that the evangelist of a whole city was sent to one man: "Philip, who had been so useful to the multitude, must now be of service to a solitary individual!"

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, one chapter of breakthroughs. Guzik walks the text and lays out the options; Sproul brings history and doctrine — Saul's sincerity, Simon's false faith, Isaiah 53, the simple profession; Spurgeon rejoices over joy and the open Bible; Henry draws the heart lessons. They differ plainly on who was scattered (all believers or the preachers), on Simon (undecided or spurious), and on the mode of baptism.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · Scattered	Floodgates open; accidental missionaries; Stephen's blood as seed.	Saul sure he was right and never more wrong; laymen preached.	Persecution sent them abroad; a great trial can bless a church.	Devout men mourned; the preachers were scattered and went everywhere.
II · Philip in Samaria	No room for prejudice; nothing yet says Simon's faith was false.	Joy after demonic oppression; Simon knew his power was counterfeit.	Jesus sowed, Philip reaped; he preached what Christ had done.	Convinced by miracles; bad men may be in a good frame.
III · Simon's offer	Five views of the delayed Spirit; we don't know Simon's end.	His profession was spurious; God is simply not for sale.	— (no Spurgeon page on these verses sourced here)	Hypocrites' disguises soon seen through; the gall of bitterness.
IV · The chariot	A noble man on a noble search; Isaiah 53 answered.	A desert road, reading aloud, no New Testament yet.	The Book was meant to be understood; read it until you do.	Redeemed time by reading; humble enough to ask.
V · Baptism and joy	Immersion; Philip caught away like the rapture picture.	A simple profession; not one word about the mode.	I like this eunuch; the Spirit left the Bible.	He went on rejoicing, never better pleased.

ACTS 8:1–40 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **Scattered like seed.** *Diaspeirō* carries the idea of sowing. Verse 4 begins "Therefore": the persecution is why the word spread. Spurgeon: "Sometimes, dear Friends, it is a blessing to a Church to have a great trial." THE GREEK
- **Ordinary men carried it.** The apostles stayed in Jerusalem (v1); the scattered believers preached (v4). Sproul: "Those who were scattered proclaimed the gospel of Christ everywhere they went." Henry thinks it was mainly the preachers — the teachers differ. THE TEXT
- **Philip preached Christ.** Not technique, not himself: "He did not preach up what they could do— he preached what Christ had done—" (Spurgeon). Both in a city (v5) and in a chariot (v35) the message was a Person. SPURGEON
- **Joy is the fruit.** "Much rejoicing in that city" (v8) and a man who "went on his way rejoicing" (v39). Spurgeon: "The practical effect of Christianity is happiness." THE TEXT
- **A believer who wasn't?** Simon "believed" and was baptized (v13), yet his heart was "not right before God" (v21). Guzik leaves his end open; Sproul calls the profession "spurious." Water alone does not show the heart. SPROUL
- **God is not for sale.** Simon wanted the power without the Person. Sproul: "God is simply not for sale." Peter: we are redeemed not with silver or gold but with precious blood (1 Pet 1:18–19). SPROUL
- **One man matters.** The evangelist of a city is sent down a desert road for one reader. Spurgeon: Philip "must now be of service to a solitary individual!" SPURGEON

- **Isaiah 53 has one answer.** "Of whom does the prophet say this?" (v34). Philip, beginning from that Scripture, "preached Jesus to him" (v35). The Lamb led to slaughter is Jesus. THE TEXT
- **The dry tree blossoms.** The Law kept a eunuch out of the assembly (Deut 23:1); Isaiah 56:3–5 promised him a name; Acts 8 brings him in through Christ. THE TEXT
- **Verse 37, honestly.** The NASB brackets it because the oldest manuscripts lack it. Its words are true (Rom 10:9), but this study does not build doctrine on a verse Luke probably did not write. THE TEXT

† Questions for the Table

1 **The church only left Jerusalem when persecution scattered it (8:1, 4). What hard thing in my life might God be using to send me to people I would never have reached?**

Sometimes it is a blessing to a church to have a great trial (Spurgeon).

8:1-4; Acts 1:8

2 **Philip took Christ to Samaritans, the people his own background taught him to avoid. Who are the "Samaritans" in my world, and what keeps me from them?**

Because Jesus had worked in him there was no room for prejudice (Guzik).

8:5-8; John 4:9

3 **Simon believed, was baptized and followed Philip, but his heart was not right. How can a man tell the difference between being impressed by Jesus and belonging to Him?**

God is simply not for sale (Sproul).

8:13, 18-23; Matt 7:21

4 **Where am I tempted to treat God's power as something to get, use or earn — instead of a gift I receive?**

You thought you could obtain the gift of God with money.

8:18-20; 1 Pet 1:18-19

5 **The Ethiopian said, "How could I, unless someone guides me?" Who is guiding me in the Scriptures — and whom am I guiding?**

Read it until you understand it (Spurgeon).

8:30-35; Luke 24:27

6 **Philip was sent from a whole city to one man on a desert road. Who is the one person God may be sending me to this week?**

Philip must now be of service to a solitary individual (Spurgeon).

8:26-29, 35

Acts 8 begins at a grave and ends with a man singing his way home. In between, God turns persecution into seed, breaks down a centuries-old wall in Samaria, exposes a man who wanted to buy Him, and sends an evangelist down an empty road for one reader of Isaiah 53. The word cannot be stopped, and it always ends in joy.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) completed his *Commentary* himself through the Gospels and Acts. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

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